

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**Minutes of Meeting
January 13, 2014**

PRESENT: Michael J. Retzky, Chairman
Cynthia J. Chaston, Vice Chairman
David C. DiCicco, Member
Thomas M. Jacob, Member
Matthew M. Toolan, Member
Patricia M. Carey, Director

ABSENT: Karen A. Peirce, Assistant Director

GUESTS: Needham Community Center – Katy Dirks, Pat Day, Jo-Anne Ochalla
YMCA – Janet Jankowiak, Sheri Kovalchek, Kyle Lawson
Cricket Neighbor – Dan Shapiro
Track Club – John Hrones, Michelle Geddes
Girls Lacrosse – Carolyn Fanning, Sarah Smith, Steve Hoffman
Baseball and Softball – Bill Monahan, Marc Stiller
Junior Football – John Kingston
American Legion – John Gallello
Temple Beth Shalom Softball – Eric Goldstein
Temple Aliyah Softball – Robert Brown
Boys Lacrosse – John Walsh
Summer Baseball/Coach Pitch – Jane Knights

Mr. Retzky called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM in the Charles River Room at the Public Services Administration Building.

1. **Minutes of Meeting: December 9, 2013:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2013 meeting. Mr. Jacob seconded the motion and it was passed.
2. **Director's Report:** The Commission reviewed the written report submitted by Ms. Carey. Mrs. Chaston asked about the recent Community Preservation Committee meeting. Mr. Retzky reported that the CPC reviewed the proposal submitted for design funds for the Cricket building renovation, but voted not to accept the late application. Mr. Jacob asked if the future funding of the Cricket building renovation could make it more challenging to fund other Park and Recreation projects. Ms. Carey reminded the Commission of the five year financing plan that the CPC had developed in 2013 with input from the Commission, showing the availability of funds for their projects.
3. **Assistant Director's Report:** In Ms. Peirce's absence, Ms. Carey provided a written report, giving updated information on some of the programs. The Nashoba program has had a difficult start. The first week, despite preparations the day before, the bus wouldn't start, so participants

that were able were driven to Nashoba and the chaperones met them there. On the second Saturday, while driving out to Nashoba, the program was cancelled due to incoming thunder and lightning storms. Nashoba has added an extra day to the session. In the fall, KidzArt and Introduction to Dance and Movement were cancelled due to low enrollments. Winter sessions are starting up now. Senior Billiards is preparing to start up at the new Center at the Heights. Ms. Peirce has helped to advertise monthly Ridge Hill walks led by members of the Conservation Commission. The first was held on a cold Saturday after two days of snow, and almost 20 people attended!

4. Action Items

- a. **Updated Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan:** The Commission reviewed the draft plan, which has been updated from the original 2002 plan. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the updated Integrated Pest Management Plan dated December 17, 2013. Mr. Toolan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- b. **Special Event Request – Soccer Club:** The Commission reviewed the request for the 38th Memorial Day Weekend Soccer Tournament. Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request from the Soccer Club for the 2014 Memorial Day Weekend Soccer Tournament. Mr. Toolan seconded the motion. As the Commission discussed the request, they still had some questions, and they asked to have a representative of the Soccer Club attend the next meeting to provide some additional information. The vote on the motion was postponed.
- c. **Special Event Requests – Needham Baseball and Softball:** The Commission reviewed four requests from Needham Baseball and Softball. Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the request for *Opening Day* on Sunday, May 4, 2014 at Greene's Field and DeFazio Park. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion. During the discussion, Mr. DiCicco asked that Needham Baseball and Softball be reminded that no dogs are permitted at DeFazio Park. Ms. Carey will include that in the approval, along with other requirements. The motion was approved unanimously. Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the request for *Softball Skills Clinic* at Claxton Field on August 25-28, 2014. Mr. Toolan seconded the motion. Mr. DiCicco asked if this clinic was held within their season. Ms. Carey said it was held between the summer and fall seasons and that it was charged the clinic fee. The motion was approved unanimously. Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the request for *Kindergarten/Grade 1/Single A Baseball and Softball Clinics* at Mitchell School fields on specific April and May weekends in 2014. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jacob. Mr. Retzky asked if the modular construction would impact this request, but Ms. Carey said the construction was scheduled for summer, after this program was finished. The motion was approved unanimously. The Commission reviewed the request for *Coaches Challenge*. Mr. Jacob noted that there wasn't much information to explain this event. Needham Baseball and Softball Field Schedule Bill Monahan was present, and explained that it was just a fun set of games for the coaches and families. Mr. Jacob made a motion to

approve the request for a *Coaches Challenge* on Sunday, May 18, 2014 at Warner and McLeod Fields at DeFazio Park. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Chaston and was passed unanimously.

- d. **Special Event Request – Bay State Football Clinic:** Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request from Bay State Football for a clinic on August 14-16, 2014 at DeFazio Park. Mr. Jacob seconded the motion. Mrs. Chaston asked which fields were used. Ms. Carey stated that the primary use was on the two synthetic turf fields, and some additional space was given for quieter activities, primarily in the area adjacent to the Carleton Pavilion. Ms. Carey provides written instructions on what can be used at DeFazio. Mrs. Chaston asked about the fee, and Ms. Carey stated that the clinic fee was charged. Mr. Toolan asked about the food. Ms. Carey stated that the Touchdown Club handled the food for the event. In past years, they have waited to submit a request until August, but she asked that it be submitted with the clinic request this year. The motion was passed unanimously.
- e. **Special Event Request – Walker School Charity Walk:** Mr. Toolan made a motion to approve the request from the Walker School to host the start/finish of a charity walk at DeFazio Park on September 21, 2014. Mr. Jacob seconded the motion. Mr. Jacob noted that this was a fall request, unlike the others on the agenda that are for spring and summer. He asked if there would be conflicts. Ms. Carey stated that it did not impact the typical Sunday uses at DeFazio. The motion was passed unanimously.
- f. **Special Event Requests – Cub Scouts:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request from Cub Scout Pack 4 to host a *Rocket Day* at Claxton Field on March 22, 2014 and a *barbecue* at Claxton Field tot lot on May 17, 2014. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan. Mrs. Chaston asked if permission was given for use of a gas grill. Ms. Carey said that some groups make that request as it is easier for their events. The motion for both events was approved unanimously.
- g. **Special Event Request – Parent Talk:** Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the request from Parent Talk to host the Barn Babies event at the DeFazio tot-lot on April 27, 2014. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toolan. Ms. Carey stated this was an annual event, and Parent Talk has left the site clean after the event. The motion was passed unanimously.
- h. **Special Event Request – 128 Lacrosse:** Ms. Carey asked that the Commission consider approving the request, but without the specific dates, so that she could coordinate the schedule around the Track Club program. As this is a program without games, it is treated as a clinic. Mrs. Chaston made a motion to approve the request from 128 Lacrosse for a clinic permit at DeFazio Park on dates specified by the Director of Park and Recreation. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion. Mr. DiCicco reminded the Commission that the request included dates at Memorial Park, but that the Commission could not authorize those dates. The motion was passed unanimously.

- i. **Special Event Request – Relay for Life:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to approve the request from American Cancer Society to hold the annual Relay for Life at Newman School fields on May 17 and May 18, 2014. Mr. DiCicco seconded the motion. Ms. Carey explained that the organization had not requested use of the building space last year that caused a conflict with use of the building and parking. It appears that they submitted that request this year but Ms. Carey will confirm with Public Facilities. The motion was passed unanimously.
- j. **Special Event Request – Msgr Haddad Middle School:** Ms. Carey has already reached out to the school to get their input on how Greene's Field will be protected from harm. Last year, prior to renovation, the organizers had a truck driven onto the park without permission. Mr. Jacob asked that they be reminded of proper use, and warned that any repairs will be charged to the school. Mr. DiCicco made a motion to approve the request from Msgr Haddad Middle School to host a re-enactment of the Battle of Gettysburg at Greene's Field on May 22, 2014. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Chaston and was approved unanimously.

5. Discussion Items

- a. **School Feasibility Study:** Ms. Carey has not received any new information on the study of the Hillside School.
- b. **Rosemary Pool Study:** Since the December 9th meeting, the Commission has received a letter from Needham resident Sam Bass Warner asking that they consider removing the pool from the Rosemary site and turn all Town-land surrounding the lake into a passive park. The Commission has received a report from the Needham Community Center organization based on the survey they have conducted. The Commission has received a letter from Needham resident Robert Boder outlining the requirements for a pool when its primary purpose is for competitive swimming. Mr. Jacob and Ms. Carey discussed a proposed flow-chart of questions to help guide the Commission through to final decisions that need to be made by May. Mr. DiCicco asked if the Commission should start eliminating some options, but Mr. Retzky asked that the Commission wait for the final report and thoroughly read before discussions about eliminating options. Mr. Toolan asked that a set of questions be developed regarding programming, so that decisions can be made on what Park and Recreation would try to program at a site and what they would support others in the community to provide. Mr. DiCicco suggested that some meetings just be scheduled for discussions about the pool.
- c. **Town-Wide Facilities Study:** Mr. Toolan and Ms. Carey explained that the kick-off to this project will include a Visioning Session for members of Town boards on Monday, January 27 from 5:30-7:30 PM. Since the Visioning Session conflicts with the regularly scheduled Park and Recreation meeting, the Commission will move their meeting

location to Town Hall and start their meeting at 7:30 PM. The PPBC and the consultants will also schedule public meetings, to get input from residents.

- d. **Board of Health – Concussions:** Mr. DiCicco and Ms. Carey attended a Board of Health meeting in December and offered the support of the Commission for a survey to be done with all the youth sports organizations regarding concussions. The Health Department has drafted a survey and the Commission has reviewed the questions, but would like to spend some more time discussing the questions. Mr. DiCicco noted that the Board of Health is recommending that permits be contingent on organizations having their coaches complete required concussion training, similar to what has been established in Boston. Ms. Carey has talked to her Boston colleague who is responsible for oversight. He noted that he gets signed paperwork from all the groups prior to issuing the permits, but does not have actual confirmation that all groups have actually provided the training prior to submitting their forms. Mr. DiCicco will discuss this with the groups attending tonight's Field Scheduling Summit.
- e. **Newman/Eastman Conservation Project:** Ms. Carey reported that the Town is close to hiring the consultant to design the renovations to the two areas at Newman. She will discuss with other organizations at the Field Scheduling Summit to see if groups have interest in participating in design discussions and in raising funds for some additional work. Needham Baseball and Softball has already stated their interest.
- f. **FY'15 Operating/Capital Budgets:** Ms. Carey noted that there is still about a \$1 million difference between initial budget requests and estimated revenue. Each department manager has been asked to provide an outline of what would be impacted if a 1% budget cut was made to the operating budget. For Park and Recreation, it would be about \$6,000 and the DSR-4 request for additional funds for playground maintenance would not be provided. Ms. Carey recommended some additional cuts to playground maintenance, avoiding making cuts to revenue generating programs. She noted her concern for the impact of a 1% cut to the DPW Parks and Forestry budget, which would be higher than the possible cut to Park and Recreation.
- g. **Field Scheduling Summit:** Mr. Retzky welcomed all of the organizations attending the annual summit. He re-stated that space was limited while at the same time organizations continued to grow and expand. Mr. Retzky reminded the organizations that the Field Maintenance Fee had increased on January 2, 2014. The organizations had been part of the deliberation for this fee last spring and were told of the vote last summer. Mr. Retzky also reminded the groups that they are able to share permit space with each other, and then needed to notify Park and Recreation of the sharing agreement. Mr. DiCicco updated the organizations on the discussions with the Board of Health on concussion education and prevention. He asked that organizations provide him with a contact to help him put together a report on how groups are currently handling concussions. Sarah Smith from Girls Lacrosse stated that her program had done a pilot education program with the Health Department but that it was hard for a

volunteer organization to follow-through on it as a requirement. Sabatino Sodano from the Soccer Club stated that all travel coaches and assistant coaches are required to do the training and provide a certificate in order to be able to coach in the program. Mr. Toolan noted that many coaches were not prepared to handle all of the accidents that happen, and that concussions were not the only concern, so that the discussion should include first-aid, too. He also noted that the Commission would need to determine its role in the follow-up. Ms. Carey reviewed the time-line for submitting schedule requests and went over projects that had been completed or were scheduled for the upcoming year. Greene's Field and Walker-Gordon will come back into use, but will require all user groups to use carefully and respect the investment that went into those parks. Claxton has had some fence work done, and a few more projects are scheduled that will not interfere with use. Mitchell will be closed for the summer so that the modular classrooms can be added to the site. Mills has some work under design but not ready for construction this year. Cricket has been discussed as a possible site for a new elementary school, but the Park and Recreation Commission voted in the fall to remove the park from consideration. At the conclusion of the Commission meeting, the groups attending the summit will have an opportunity to discuss shared uses of the fields.

- 6. Topics for Future Agendas:** Ms. Carey will invite the dog park group to a February meeting.
- 7. Adjournment:** Mr. Jacob made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 PM. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Chaston and the meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Carey, CPRP
Director